

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

**TOSHIO HAMATAKA**

September 9, 1991  
Sacramento, California

By Marion Kanemoto

Florin Japanese American Citizens League  
and Oral History Program  
California State University, Sacramento  
Sacramento, California





# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

FLORIN CHAPTER •

• SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95828

## PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin or have relatives and friends who have ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Many hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind; they were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their seventies, eighties and nineties. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jacqueline S. Reinier, Director of the Oral History Program at California State University, Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also want to acknowledge the project volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, and Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTERVIEW HISTORY	i
BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY	ii
SESSION I, September 19, 1989	
(Tape I, Side A).....	1
Parents arrival to the United States in the Florin area--	
Early life on the farm, school and at work--Drafted in July	
1941, Early Army life -- Marriage to Sue on July 18, 1941--	
(Tape I, Side B)	
Life as a Private First Class in Texas--Sue returns to	
relocation camp with Hannah and Ronald and on to Amache camp	
-- Furlough to take care of family property before going	
overseas to Europe.....	36
(Tape II, Side A).....	41
Moved to East coast for embarkation--Replacement group for	
the Lost Battalion with the motor company-- War injuries--	
Plumeliare, France----Serious second time injuries.....	53
(Tape II, Side B)	
One hundred sixty two penicillin shots--60% disability--Two	
Purple Hearts and a Cluster--To Amache camp--Return to Florin	
in September 1945--Lost everything left behind--Garage	
business-- About the children; Hannah, Ronald, Jane and	
Connie--Grandchildren--Hobbies--Traveling--Faith Healer in	
the Philipines.....	70
APPENDIX A.....	71
Notice of Casualty	



## INTERVIEW HISTORY

### INTERVIEWER

Marion Kanemoto, retired school nurse and member of the Florin Japanese American Citizen League.

### EDITOR

Elizabeth Pinkerton, Elk Grove Unified School District Administrator, Historian, and Florin Japanese Citizens League member.

### INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

September 19, 1991  
Home of Toshio and Sue Hamataka  
7374 Reese Road  
Sacramento, California 95828

### TRANSCRIBING

Koji Uesugi, student of University of California, Davis, English major. Laurie Kojima, student at California State University, Sacramento, entered the corrections after editing the first draft.

### EDITING

Kanemoto checked the verbatim manuscript of the interview against the original tape recordings.

Hamataka declined to review the manuscript on May 4, 1993.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Dan Inouye reproduced the pictures from the family album.



## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Toshio Hamataka is a Nisei, born on January 16, 1915, in the Fruitridge area of Sacramento. His youth took place during the depression years. He left high school in his sophomore year, and he spent much of his youth as a fruit "box maker" to help out the family.

His parents, Yiematsu and Suzuno came from Hiroshima, Japan. Yiematsu, his father, preceded his mother by coming to the United States with two brothers to seek their fortune. Suzuno came later as a picture bride. His two sisters are Kiyoko and Sumiko, and his three brothers are Eihaku, Satsuki, and Saburo.

Hamataka was drafted into the U. S. Army in 1941 and married Sue the same year. They had four children: Hannah, Ronald, Jane, and Connie.

Hamataka spent his army days during the confusing time when the west-coast Japanese were sent into relocation camps. His wife and family were sent to the Amache relocation camp in Colorado.

As a young soldier, he was sent to several army bases but ultimately was assigned as a replacement troop with the now famous 100th Battalion, 422nd Regimental Combat Team which fought heavy battles in the European campaign. He received two Purple Hearts and Cluster and has received 60% disability for his severe injuries. He recalls several vivid and candid war stories.

Hamataka is a modest man and has been a survivor for what life has dealt him. With humor and reflections, he portrays a very caring man, loving husband and a proud father of four children and two grandchildren. As a hard working veteran, he was successful as a mechanic and garage owner.

Hamataka belongs to the Nisei Veteran of Foreign Wars, Post 8985, and the Florin Buddhist Church. He enjoys Kokanee fishing and golfing.



### TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by Florin Japanese American Citizen League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819.



[Session 1, September 9, 1991]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

KANEMOTO: This is the oral history of Toshio Hamataka, taken on September 19, 1991 at his home at 7374 Reese Road, Sacramento, California. He has lived here for five years. His birth date is January 16, 1915, making him 76 years old. He is a very special person as this story will unfold. He has played an eighteen hole golf game and is still able to respond to this interview. Also present is Sue, his wife. Tosh, let's go all the way back, and may be start from your parents. You can go further back than your parents, and go back to your grandparents, but we would like to know where your parents came from. What ken in Japan? Can you tell us?

HAMATAKA: Well, my parents came from Hiroshima.

KANEMOTO: Both of them, mother and father?

HAMATAKA: I think my mother came as a picture bride. I don't know what year.

KANEMOTO: Were they already married?

HAMATAKA: No.



KANEMOTO: So your father was here first?

HAMATAKA: Father was here first. Three brothers with him.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember the names of your uncles then?

HAMATAKA: My oldest uncle was Eiichi. My father was next. He's  
Yiematsu, and the youngest one was Fujimatsu.

KANEMOTO: Did they all come here together?

HAMATAKA: I'm pretty sure they all came here together.

KANEMOTO: Did they have a goal in mind? Did they know exactly what  
they were going to do?

HAMATAKA: No, they were gonna make lots of money.

KANEMOTO: That was their only dream. Now let's see. Let's try to jog  
your mind and see about what year this was. Was it  
after 1900?

HAMATAKA: Yes, they talked about the earthquake in 1906.

KANEMOTO: So, they were here in 1906. You say maybe a few years  
before 1906?

HAMATAKA: Yes, they started farming. First they were working in the  
labor.

KANEMOTO: And where was this? In the Florin area?

HAMATAKA: Yes, it's along this area here. I don't think they went to  
Hawaii or anything like that.

KANEMOTO: About what time do you think your mother came?  
She was a picture bride through the stories that you have  
heard?



HAMATAKA: It must've been around 1912.... no, 1913 I think.

KANEMOTO: Let's get to your family. Since you were born in 1915, are you the oldest?

HAMATAKA: No, my sister is older.

KANEMOTO: Can we list the names of your brothers and sisters? Your oldest sister's name was?

HAMATAKA: Kiyoko.

KANEMOTO: Kiyoko.

HAMATAKA: I was next.

KANEMOTO: And then?

HAMATAKA: And then I have a sister.

KANEMOTO: What was her name?

HAMATAKA: Sumiko. Do you just want Japanese names?

KANEMOTO: Sumiko. Yes, that's okay, but do they have English names?

HAMATAKA: They have... [nods yes]

KANEMOTO: But at that time?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: They didn't. It was amended?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: That was what was done at that time wasn't it; in those early years. That's very interesting because that's what makes history. . .

HAMATAKA: I had a brother after Sumiko.

KANEMOTO: What was the name of that brother?



HAMATAKA: Eihaku. Then comes Satsuki.

KANEMOTO: That's a boy's name isn't it?

HAMATAKA: Then comes Saburo.

KANEMOTO: Satsuki's a girl's name?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: That means there were six of you. In those days that was a common thing wasn't it, to have larger families? What was your mother's maiden name? Do you remember this?

HAMATAKA: Hamano.

KANEMOTO: And her first name?

HAMATAKA: Suzuno.

KANEMOTO: Suzuno Hamano. Did she also come from Hiroshima?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Do you recall your mother's story of how this picture bride was put together? How your father might have [arranged it]?

HAMATAKA: I really don't know too much about that.

KANEMOTO: Out of curiosity, we know it happened, and we wonder what transpired to make it work. It must have taken a lot of doing.

HAMATAKA: They must have known each other from before, to send for her.

KANEMOTO: Did she come from the same ken or town maybe?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: So they checked out the family that way. That's very interesting.



HAMATAKA: I'm glad you asked me that. I wish I knew more about it.

KANEMOTO: That's how everybody talks about it. So when your great grandchildren want to know, they can refer to this, and they'll have all this information. And they'll ask how you and Sue met, and her maiden name, and this will all fall into place. It's a matter of just taking the time.

[Sue Hamataka enters]

SUE: I think his mother comes from Hiuna.

KANEMOTO: Hiuna.

SUE: Hiuna, in Hiroshima.

KANEMOTO: Is it still there as a town?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Has it become smaller or larger?

SUE: I haven't been back there since.

KANEMOTO: What was it mostly? Primarily farming? Agriculture?

HAMATAKA: No, no, it was fishing. (Sue and Tosh together)

KANEMOTO: Oh, a fishing village.

SUE: Right by the ocean.

KANEMOTO: By the ocean. Facing Miyajima then.

HAMATAKA: That's not a ocean. (to Sue)

SUE: They don't have a ocean. They filled it in and made it into a Mazda plant.

KANEMOTO: Oh yes, right.

HAMATAKA: Have you been there?



- KANEMOTO: Yes, I went there two years ago-the Hiroshima Mazda. So that was the town right there?
- HAMATAKA: The factory's right in front of the place.
- KANEMOTO: Most of the people at that time were fishermen?
- HAMATAKA: Yes, fishermen. How come my parents didn't know nothing about fishing?
- SUE: Who?
- HAMATAKA: Pop and them. [Laughter]
- KANEMOTO: Okay, they didn't like fishing, so that's why they came to America right? [Laughter]
- HAMATAKA: They came so young, I guess a. . . .
- KANEMOTO: Do you remember how old your father was when he came? I know that some of these pioneers were very young.
- HAMATAKA: Teenagers.
- KANEMOTO: How old would you say he was?
- HAMATAKA: I don't know. I guess he was around twenty.
- KANEMOTO: About twenty. Then Eiji, Yeimatsu, and Fujimatsu were all close in age?
- HAMATAKA: Yes.
- KANEMOTO: Well, that was nice, because I think they had the moral support of the brothers. None of the sisters came?
- HAMATAKA: No.
- KANEMOTO: Did they all settle down here in the United States, or did some of them go back to Hiroshima after they made their



fortune?

HAMATAKA: They never did go back.

KANEMOTO: Are they in this area? The Florin area?

HAMATAKA: No, not anymore. They all died.

KANEMOTO: What about their descendants...

HAMATAKA: After the war, they settled in Fresno.

KANEMOTO: Fresno, okay.

HAMATAKA: You talking about my uncles?

KANEMOTO: Yes.

SUE: In Spokane.

KANEMOTO: In Spokane, okay.

HAMATAKA: Not Spokane, in Portland. My youngest was in Portland.

KANEMOTO: Let me see now, I know that you have longevity in your family. Your mother recently passed away. How old was she?

HAMATAKA: Ninety-eight.

KANEMOTO: Ninety-eight, now is this some hereditary trait in your family? Is this a family trait? Did your father live to be an elderly man?

HAMATAKA: I don't think so, eighty-six.

KANEMOTO: Eighty-six, your father. That's what Sue says.

HAMATAKA: She knows more than I do.

KANEMOTO: Women have a tendency to remember. [Laughter]

Now you're sorry you didn't listen to your mom. So, it



looks like you are following in her footsteps; you're healthy and you're going to have a long and productive [life].

HAMATAKA: It's crying inside.

KANEMOTO: It's crying inside? Well, you can cry and share it with us. That's all right, this is what it's all about. We'd rather have you very honest, because it is true history, living history.

KANEMOTO: Let's move onto your early, early childhood. Where was this? Where were you born, right here in Florin or was it another town?

HAMATAKA: Oh, it was close by. Fruitridge area.

KANEMOTO: So you were born in the Fruitridge area? And you were assisted by a midwife on your delivery to the best of your knowledge.

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: What kind of work did your father do at that time?

HAMATAKA: He was farming

KANEMOTO: Can you tell me what type of farming?

HAMATAKA: Mostly strawberries. He was working as a laborer I guess, most started out as [laborers].

KANEMOTO: Most of the Japanese did.

HAMATAKA: Then he went out on his own, strawberries, grapes, or something like that.

KANEMOTO: So, as you grew up, your mother was working on the. . .

HAMATAKA: She worked when my father had his own acreage.



KANEMOTO: Would you say that your early childhood was fun or carefree?  
Or did you have to pitch in also when your father had his  
own farm?

HAMATAKA: No, he had quite a few people hired at that time.

KANEMOTO: You didn't work on the farm at all then?

HAMATAKA: I was a little kid.

KANEMOTO: Some people, you know, used child labor.

HAMATAKA: Five or six years old?

KANEMOTO: Well okay, but when you were in your early teens though,  
did you go out to help?

HAMATAKA: Well, when I was a teenager, I went out and worked. Twelve  
years old, I was doing a man's work.

KANEMOTO: I know, this is what I'm trying to get the story from you. Not  
too many twelve year olds can really make a living, but you  
did that. And that was common in those days. Children  
were used as labor too you know. And you did it because you  
saw your parents work so hard, right?

HAMATAKA: Well, we were trying to make ends meet, at the beginning of  
the Depression.

KANEMOTO: That's right.

HAMATAKA: You don't remember that?

KANEMOTO: I don't remember that, no. But do you remember the effects  
of the Depression?

HAMATAKA: Sure, I remember that we went to work for this one place at



ten, no twelve cents an hour. And we never got paid.

HAMATAKA: It was in the Cordova area.

KANEMOTO: You took the trouble to go out there, but you never got paid.

HAMATAKA: Me and my mother at that time.

KANEMOTO: What was that? Primarily grapes and strawberries?

HAMATAKA: No, there were mostly grapes out there, and some had berries. You know the whole Cordova area used to be wine grapes?

KANEMOTO: How did you feel? Did you feel bitter? You knew about work ethics. If you work you get paid for it, but when you didn't get paid, how did you feel?

HAMATAKA: I don't know. Somehow we got through. We knew it wasn't only us see. Took it in stride I guess.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember going hungry?

HAMATAKA: We never did go hungry.

KANEMOTO: Oh, because of the farm. Now, what about your education? Were you involved in that segregated Japanese American school?

HAMATAKA: No, because I went to enterprise school. You know what that is?

KANEMOTO: Yes. I know.

HAMATAKA: If I was in Florida, I would've gone to segregated school.

KANEMOTO: But you went to Enterprise?

HAMATAKA: Because I lived here.



KANEMOTO: Do you remember some of the teachers' names, or something happy or bad that happened to you while you were attending school at Enterprise?

HAMATAKA: The teacher I remember, but I didn't have her much is Mrs. Romer.

KANEMOTO: Why do you remember her?

KANEMOTO: Oh, her boys attended the same school?

HAMATAKA: Their father died when they were little kids yet. Their father died suddenly.

KANEMOTO: Okay, in your early childhood, do you remember any experiences of prejudice?

HAMATAKA: Oh, I guess so. Well, when you go to a school like that. . .

KANEMOTO: Sure. Certain things were said to you or done to you? What do you remember?

HAMATAKA: Oh, they call me names, like "Jap".

KANEMOTO: That was common wasn't it?

HAMATAKA: That was common. And our school had quite a few Japanese see. . .

KANEMOTO: So you had their moral support.

HAMATAKA: We had their support.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember anything really bad happening?

HAMATAKA: I wouldn't say, no. I think we had more prejudice, more happening in high school.

KANEMOTO: In those days? Things are happening even now.



HAMATAKA: It is?

KANEMOTO: Well, there are some violence you know. But even in your days, this was happening.

HAMATAKA: We had buses.

KANEMOTO: And that was all provided for you?

HAMATAKA: You know what I used to do? I used to go out for football, and I couldn't find my way home. There were few people who came back this way, and if they did, they all loaded up in their car or something. I walked back seven miles after football practice.

KANEMOTO: And it would be dark, and you'd be walking in the dark on a country road. Even now, some of it is still country, so that was really country. What did you think about it? You loved football enough to continue, is that right?

HAMATAKA: I was too small then, so I gave it up. Although we had other guys smaller than I was maybe. In fact Yamada, I don't know if anybody knew that, but he was one of the most famous Nisei. He played ProBowl in Japan.

KANEMOTO: And what was his name?

HAMATAKA: Frank Yamada. He died of cancer.

KANEMOTO: So what were your most fond memories of the high school days?

HAMATAKA: I don't know, I don't remember that long, because I dropped out.



KANEMOTO: You dropped out?

HAMATAKA: Second year.

KANEMOTO: That was your junior year? Or sophomore year?

HAMATAKA: Sophomore.

KANEMOTO: Sophomore. What made you drop out, Tosh?

HAMATAKA: Mainly, I dropped out because a job was offered to me.

KANEMOTO: See that's the difference today. The law protects you whereas you can't have a job. Well, so many hours.

HAMATAKA: It wasn't a permanent job. It was a seasonal job, so I took that job and quit school.

KANEMOTO: At least you weren't afraid of work.

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: So this was also agriculture? Farming?

HAMATAKA: I was working in asparagus.

KANEMOTO: Was that in the Delta area?

HAMATAKA: Delta, way up by the other side of Rio Vista. It was a special job. I didn't work with the Filipinos. I worked in a shed. I made crates for packing. We used to work almost around the clock.

KANEMOTO: There were your growing up years, and once you started working, there was no end.

HAMATAKA: No, because the peak would come in. At first it's slow, and we have plenty of time, but when the peak came in you were over-loaded. And you didn't get no extra man. I had to load



up five or six crates, and then help in the shed, 'cause they were short. Everybody quit, and we still had to finish out for them. And that was two o'clock in the morning.

KANEMOTO: So you had to keep ahead of the pack. . .

HAMATAKA: By the time I clean up and try to go to bed, the Filipino cook is gettin' up already. By seven o'clock I have to be out there.

KANEMOTO: So, we're talking' about 16? 15? 16 years old?

HAMATAKA: I was 16.

KANEMOTO: You were doing a man's size job. How much were you getting for your work? Was it by the hour or by the day?

HAMATAKA: No, by the piece, because I was making the crates. For that period, I made good money. I couldn't go anywhere, I couldn't spend any money.

KANEMOTO: So you saved it? Do you remember the dollar amount that you got?

HAMATAKA: I think I made maybe 300 dollars then.

KANEMOTO: For what?

HAMATAKA: For the period that I was there.

KANEMOTO: For the season that you were there. What do we call a season?

HAMATAKA: About a month and a half.

KANEMOTO: And that was good money then.

HAMATAKA: Among all those packers and [others], I was making the best money. But that didn't last too long.



KANEMOTO: How were you selected to do the making of the crates? Being so young, did you have a special talent?

HAMATAKA: No, we all did that in those days, at home too. If you had a farm or anything, especially grapes, we had to make our own boxes. We started young too. By 12, 13, or 14, I was ready. So I followed the [fruit shed]. I think my uncle started me off in Newcastle. From there on, I followed all the way . . . then I got the asparagus deal; then I had the grapes; then I had the Terminus for celery.

KANEMOTO: Terminus. Is that a place?

HAMATAKA: That's west of Lodi.

KANEMOTO: Is it a town?

HAMATAKA: Well, it's a little town. The area was all celery at that time.

KANEMOTO: So you learned something new from each place that you moved onto, doing a man's size job...

HAMATAKA: And the following year, we just repeated. I worked at the Lodi fruit shed for five years.

KANEMOTO: Were you banking all this money away? Or helping your parents?

HAMATAKA: I gave most of my money to my parents.

KANEMOTO: Were your parents having a hard time?

HAMATAKA: They were making a go at it because it was fairly new; a new place where we moved into.

KANEMOTO: Is this the time when he bought the place? Did your father



buy a new place by then? What did he do? Did he use someone else's name?

HAMATAKA: Yes, he used someone else's name.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember the person's name?

HAMATAKA: Yasukawa.

KANEMOTO: And that person was a much older Nisei than you?

HAMATAKA: Yes, an older Nisei.

KANEMOTO: That was done in those days.

HAMATAKA: Up to that time. . . when was it? Till after the war? [to Sue]  
They changed to mining then, huh?

KANEMOTO: When you became of age. Good timing huh?

HAMATAKA: When I was, how old do you have to be? Twenty-one to get there?

KANEMOTO: You were legal age at 21. Your oldest one was a sister, so they never thought putting it in your sister's name. At that time, they were pretty sexist you know. The male always took the role.

KANEMOTO: You said you had to work really hard in Lodi. So that was what, celery?

HAMATAKA: No, that was grapes. Making boxes for it.

KANEMOTO: So you did most of the box making? Was that your specialty?

HAMATAKA: In Lodi, we had 14 or 15 box makers, all identical. I used to make the most boxes.

KANEMOTO: And got the most money.



HAMATAKA: And when the rainy season came, at the peak, we worked till 12, you know.

KANEMOTO: Midnight?

HAMATAKA: Midnight.

KANEMOTO: Tell me, were these all Japanese Americans?

HAMATAKA: No, there was only about three or four Japanese.

KANEMOTO: What other nationality was represented?

HAMATAKA: They were Caucasians.

KANEMOTO: Were there some Filipinos?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: No, not in that area. What age was this at Lodi? Are you 20 years old by this time?

HAMATAKA: It started from 20 until the time I got drafted, which was 25.

KANEMOTO: So that was before the war and camp days. You are already an enlisted man.

HAMATAKA: At 26, I was drafted [in July of 1941].

KANEMOTO: When this happened, did you have any fun things?  
Recreation? Club membership?

HAMATAKA: Not much. Club membership?

KANEMOTO: You didn't belong to any Kenjinkai? Any sports?

HAMATAKA: I belonged to a church, but that's about it.

KANEMOTO: Did you belong to any baseball groups? Japanese baseball groups?

HAMATAKA: I never played baseball but I supported it.



KANEMOTO: So you primarily did a lot of work?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Then Tosh, you were married before you were drafted?

HAMATAKA: No, after I got drafted.

KANEMOTO: So you left for the military, and where did you go first?

HAMATAKA: Camp Robertson.

KANEMOTO: In California?

HAMATAKA: California. It's near San Luis Obispo.

KANEMOTO: Had you already met Sue?

HAMATAKA: Oh, I knew her a long time already.

KANEMOTO: How? Through church? How did you meet Sue? Through church? School? Neighbors?

HAMATAKA: By my friend.

KANEMOTO: You met Sue by your friend. Do you remember your friend's name?

HAMATAKA: Frank Yarita.

KANEMOTO: So then you were drafted and then went to Camp Robertson. What period did you get married? Did you go over seas? Or before you went to...

HAMATAKA: After Camp Robertson. Then, I went to San Luis Obispo from there.

KANEMOTO: You were at Camp Robertson for how long?

HAMATAKA: Basic training. Three months.

KANEMOTO: Three months. How was it?



HAMATAKA: How was it? Oh, that was rough.

KANEMOTO: Harder than farming?

HAMATAKA: The heat gets you during the summer days, and the heat was 110-115 there. It cuts off all the mountain breeze. We got out there during the hottest time of the year. In July.

KANEMOTO: Was this a mixed group Tosh? I'm not too familiar with what happened to the military people, so you're going to have to share this with me.

HAMATAKA: We were all mixed.

KANEMOTO: Did you have any bad feelings or bad experiences in an American uniform?

HAMATAKA: The draftees were not from California. They were from Illinois, Michigan, and . . .

KANEMOTO: Really mixed throughout the United States.

HAMATAKA: And they didn't know Japanese.

KANEMOTO: So they accepted you for what you were and didn't identify you as Japanese-American.

HAMATAKA: I don't think we had any trouble at all.

KANEMOTO: That's good to hear. What would you say was the percentage of Japanese in this group?

HAMATAKA: When you go by percentages, it was pretty small.

KANEMOTO: So it was well mixed. In other words it was a good representation. So you were selected to be what specialty in the army? Everybody had the same basic training, and you were sent to



San Luis Obispo. What kind of training were you subjected to?

HAMATAKA: Infantry.

KANEMOTO: What was your feeling about it? Did you feel this was your duty?

HAMATAKA: Oh, I thought about that. . . at that time, we were in it for one year.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

KANEMOTO: You said you expected to be there for one year, and then get out to go home. But then the war broke out, so we're talking about late in 1941. What was your reaction to the Pearl Harbor as a young man in the service.

HAMATAKA: Boy, I mean that really surprised us because. . . and at the same time, we worked real hard so we were prepared.

KANEMOTO: Prepared for what?

HAMATAKA: We were prepared for war.

KANEMOTO: You had that feeling?

HAMATAKA: Well, something was gonna happen.

KANEMOTO: You kind of sensed it?

HAMATAKA: Yes, because we couldn't get out of the area.

KANEMOTO: Is that everybody or just the Japanese?

HAMATAKA: The whole camp.

KANEMOTO: I see, so you were on emergency alert?



- HAMATAKA: It was an alert. We had to pack up now and pack up permanently and we were takin' our own tents down. You know, it was kind of permanent tent but we took everything down.
- KANEMOTO: So you knew it wasn't play or practice.
- HAMATAKA: We were supposed to move out of there. And then the news came in. And after that, I think two days after that, they moved us out. Of course we went into San Pedro.
- KANEMOTO: Yes, in the Los Angeles area.
- HAMATAKA: And our company stayed in the. . . they had the Gibson Electrical Plant there, and had rooms there to pack us in.
- KANEMOTO: When Pearl Harbor happened, you didn't get any leave to visit your parents?
- HAMATAKA: No, not right away.
- KANEMOTO: Were you able to visit your parents though? And how did your parents feel as Isseis to see you in a United States uniform? Did they accept it?
- HAMATAKA: Oh yes, they accepted it. But we didn't know what was going to happen; where we gonna go. We didn't know if they were gonna take us out to sea or what. During that time we were on Terminal Island, everybody was on guard duty. They put me on guard duty on different times and the bridge coming into Terminal Island, they put me on guard duty there. And there were all Japanese people coming in there.



KANEMOTO: They didn't change your duties? I mean with Pearl Harbor and Japan invading the United States, but they did not distinguish you as a Japanese American G.I.?

HAMATAKA: They did, I'll come to that. And I was also in the department of immigration. They had immigration of Terminal Island and I looked out and there were all Japanese in there.

KANEMOTO: Japanese-Japanese? So they were Japanese picked up off the ships around the coast?

HAMATAKA: Yes, they were picked up around the area.

KANEMOTO: So you kind of went in to use your bilingual?

HAMATAKA: No, what I'm saying is that I didn't get to speak it.

KANEMOTO: Oh, you didn't, because you said you worked for immigration. So you didn't interrogate them?

HAMATAKA: No, I was on guard duty there. I had to check the auto vehicles coming in and out of there. Same way with that ferry. They had a ferry there.

KANEMOTO: This is in San Pedro?

HAMATAKA: Yes, San Pedro to Terminal Island. Most of the people who were going in and out of there were Japanese from Terminal Island. So I was doing that for awhile. Then we had to move out of Terminal Island to Long Beach side. Then they took us off guard.

KANEMOTO: What were you asked to do?

HAMATAKA: We had to stay in the company for K.P. and all that.



KANEMOTO: Oh you did kind of K.P.; more than your share, in other words.

HAMATAKA: And that's when they pulled me off K.P. because I was eating too much rations.

KANEMOTO: What were you told to do off of K.P. then?

HAMATAKA: Well, my First Sergeant said, "Take Hamataka off K.P. because we're getting short rations."

KANEMOTO: We didn't have a shortage then did we?

HAMATAKA: Well, the thing is all the things were counted. We had 200 in the company and we got rations for 200 people. And you know the milk they have? I was drinking half a dozen of those. Then they used to have meat and things like that and I used to help myself.

KANEMOTO: Tosh, tell me was this because you didn't have all this food when you were at home. Was this a new taste that was acquired?

HAMATAKA: No, you don't have enough to do in the war 'cause you're idle.

KANEMOTO: Oh, I see. That's understandable.

HAMATAKA: See, when you're idle you put on weight. It doesn't matter if people got guard duty or anything, because you're doing something. If you don't have guard duty, you have nothing else to do.

KANEMOTO: So you ate. What happened after that.



HAMATAKA: Well, April came around and we were all shipped out of there from the West Coast.

KANEMOTO: By then, wasn't your family told to evacuate if it's April now?

HAMATAKA: We were evacuated before then. Was I in Texas before then?

SUE: No.

HAMATAKA: April? That's when we moved out. April huh? Then they rounded up all the Nisseis. Maybe there was 250 or more or less.

KANEMOTO: All Japanese Americans; Nisseis.

HAMATAKA: Yes. They put 'em on one long train, and they went down to the southeast, east from L.A. We didn't know where we were going. Nobody told us.

KANEMOTO: Well, you were treated like the people back home. We were never told where we were gonna go when we went to the assembly center. The shades were drawn; we didn't know. So they treated you the same way then.

HAMATAKA: No, we were free to walk around and . . . like that.  
And we didn't have no M.P.'s either.

KANEMOTO: They weren't too worried about you then as far as military secrets.

HAMATAKA: When we headed to El Paso, they were going to take some of the group off there, and I was among them. So they took half of them.

KANEMOTO: They took half of that 250?



HAMATAKA: And then we went to Fort Bliss.

KANEMOTO: And that was your group?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: What were you being groomed for? What were you being trained to do now?

HAMATAKA: We were led to the reception center. That's where the recruit comes in. We were assigned as a cadre there. Everything was frozen; our promotion, whatever.

KANEMOTO: Just you Nisseis.

HAMATAKA: Yes. We had some recruits come in and start off and they'd get a promotion, and we'd just hang back and get nothin'. And the other half went to Sam Houston.

KANEMOTO: Were they treated more or less the same?

HAMATAKA: I guess so.

KANEMOTO: By then, the evacuation talk and the way you were being treated, what about the general public of the military; the other recruits? How did they treat you? With any, you know, respect or different kind of a relationship?

HAMATAKA: They didn't treat me badly; we weren't discriminated or anything like that. That's because we had most of the recruits coming in, and they were mostly Mexicans and Indians. And they were young.

KANEMOTO: The officers too? The old-timers? They didn't discriminate you or give you a hard time?



HAMATAKA: No, we had some fights and things like that.

KANEMOTO: You mean verbal fights?

HAMATAKA: Verbal and some physical. But that's because the Kibeis were suddenly pretty rough.

KANEMOTO: Were there Hawaiian Nisseis there?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: These were all Mainland Nisseis.

HAMATAKA: We had Nisei and Kibei. As far as camp goes, we got along pretty good.

KANEMOTO: So now, how did you get information about your people back home? Your parents had a lot to take care of. Did you get communication? The telephone wasn't as efficient as today.

HAMATAKA: Mostly by letter.

KANEMOTO: How did you communicate? Did your father and mother actually write to you or was it your sister?

HAMATAKA: My sister.

KANEMOTO: Yes, I know we have that language barrier so I can understand. Your sister was about an adult; were they having a hard time?

HAMATAKA: In camp you mean?

KANEMOTO: No, before they left here; they had to take care of things.

HAMATAKA: Oh, I don't know. She (Sue) knows more about it than I do.

KANEMOTO: When did you get married to Sue?

HAMATAKA: Before I went to San Luis Obispo.



KANEMOTO: Oh I see. Well, we missed that important part. Where did you get married? And you got married in a uniform?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: And you came back to the Florin area?

SUE: We got married in Reno.

KANEMOTO: In Reno? Oh, what was your wedding date?

SUE: July 18th.

KANEMOTO: So that would be 1941? Just before Pearl Harbor. So what does that mean now? That means that Sue stayed behind or did you go with him?

SUE: I stayed behind.

KANEMOTO: You stayed behind because a young soldier didn't have a dependent following him. So Sue, did you have a separate household or stay with your parents?

SUE: Stayed with his parents and worked in the [fields].

KANEMOTO: It was hard work. And that was traditional. Most families did do that. So from Fort Bliss, Tosh, what did you do then? From '42, what was your next move from there?

HAMATAKA: I stayed there a couple years.

KANEMOTO: Oh, a couple of years. What were you doing all this time?

HAMATAKA: Mostly we processed the recruits.

KANEMOTO: You knew you were not getting promoted and everything was on hold. Other than that, did you feel any different?

HAMATAKA: No. None of us were gonna have a promotion.



KANEMOTO: Right.

HAMATAKA: Sue was with me. She came to El Paso. After they got into the assembly center in Fresno, I sent for her. She had a baby at that time.

KANEMOTO: The assembly center in Fresno was our first camp. So you moved from there to El Paso. Did you have to find your own housing?

HAMATAKA: Yes, a one room apartment.

KANEMOTO: A lot of us did that. When was the baby born?

SUE: She was born in February.

KANEMOTO: Soon after you went to El Paso?

SUE: No, I went into El Paso in June.

KANEMOTO: So the baby was born where in camp in Fresno?

SUE: No, she was born in Sacramento.

KANEMOTO: Oh, in Sacramento, before you even went to camp?

SUE: She was about a couple months old when we went to camp.

Oh, may be four months because we went in May.

KANEMOTO: Now, as a young G.I. though, did you have enough money to support this young family?

HAMATAKA: I'll tell you what I had to survive on.

KANEMOTO: That's what we want you to tell us.

HAMATAKA: PFC's. We didn't even get subsistence those days. They were supposed to come in June.

KANEMOTO: It was too low in rank? Is that why?



HAMATAKA: No, we were supposed to get that. . . . What do you call that money?

KANEMOTO: Dependents?

HAMATAKA: Yes, dependents. That law came in and it was supposed to start in June, but we didn't see any money until September. We were living on 60 dollars a month may be; and had to pay the rent out of that.

KANEMOTO: Do you remember how much your rent was?

HAMATAKA: \$15? \$14?

SUE: \$18.

KANEMOTO: \$18. That's about 30% of your total. . . .

HAMATAKA: I had to cut our rations so we had to stop eating at the post, so they give thirty dollars more?

KANEMOTO: To say that you don't eat the rations at the post, you get thirty more dollars towards your family or income. Did you have a car before you went to Fort Roberts?

HAMATAKA: I had a car but I didn't take it.

KANEMOTO: I'm just trying to see if there was any great loss that you had to leave behind.

HAMATAKA: We had some equipment that we had to leave behind.

KANEMOTO: And this was your father's farm equipment?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Before you got drafted, you were working for your father?

HAMATAKA: Not always, because I was gone most of the time.



KANEMOTO: So your savings were productive?

SUE: Savings? There were no savings.

KANEMOTO: But Tosh was making good money, . . .

SUE: He gave it to his folks to spend.

HAMATAKA: There wasn't that much money to keep.

KANEMOTO: I know that you were helping your folks with the money that you were earning. Things were rough. I know you worked, and when your rewards are gone, too, it's difficult. You said you were at Fort Bliss for two years?

HAMATAKA: '41-'42, when did I leave there? That was '44 that I left?

SUE: It was something like that because Ronnie was born there.

HAMATAKA: Yes, it was two years because I stayed there too long and got a boy out of that. That's Ronnie.

KANEMOTO: So he's a Texan. Then what was the next move?

HAMATAKA: Well, they start transferring everybody out.

KANEMOTO: Were you aware of what was happening?

HAMATAKA: Yes. In fact my First Sergeant told me, he said, "Eventually you're gonna get transferred so take care of things." Then we were transferred to Fort McClellan.

KANEMOTO: Where's Fort McClellan?

HAMATAKA: It's in Alabama.

KANEMOTO: Did Sue go with you?

HAMATAKA: No, she stayed behind in Texas.

KANEMOTO: She didn't join the people in the camp then?



SUE: Yes, I did.

KANEMOTO: Eventually you went to Amache. With your two children, things were pretty rough on a PFC salary, weren't they?

HAMATAKA: I think I stayed at Fort McClellan for about three months. We were all seasoned soldiers, and we were taking another basic [training] over again.

KANEMOTO: What did you think about it? Did you feel like they [the Army] were thinking there was something special for you guys?

HAMATAKA: Special for us. . . something we already knew, we were going through it again. It was kind of ridiculous or something because we had all this camaraderie. We had more time than those people who had to train us. So there were near riots and all that stuff going on.

KANEMOTO: This was on the base?

HAMATAKA: Yes. We had some people who said they were Kibei, and one day we called a training off, and all the soldiers who wanted to give up training and they wanted to go overseas or something like that. They wanted to pick them up.

KANEMOTO: So were they asking for volunteers?

HAMATAKA: No. Everybody over there wanted to get out and go to the brigade. So, I had a chance to quit too, right there. Anybody had a chance. We had two from our tent that took off.

KANEMOTO: How many people were in that tent?



HAMATAKA: Six.

KANEMOTO: Then two went.

HAMATAKA: Yes. There's two of them in Florin JACL. In fact, I don't know if they did the right thing. May be. I don't know.

KANEMOTO: What happened to them?

HAMATAKA: The way I feel, they were put in labor battalion in Tennessee, I guess.

KANEMOTO: Then, what happened to them? This is what we want to know- the untold stories.

HAMATAKA: I don't know what really happened and I can't ask these guys. I know these guys real good, but I can't ask them, "What did you do at the labor camp?" Can't ask them if they got blue discharge or what. That's an honorable discharge.

KANEMOTO: Labor camp meaning they were made to labor? Not to oversee?

HAMATAKA: Noncombatant.

KANEMOTO: So they were the victim in the labor camps or they oversaw the camp? Were they people who ran the camp or were they treated as camp people? The victims?

HAMATAKA: They're still in the service.

KANEMOTO: This is why you're saying this is the mystery?

HAMATAKA: Some of them went to Leavenworth too. The hardcore people.

KANEMOTO: I see, the hardcore people. The trouble makers; they probably



wanted to weed them out. Agitators?

HAMATAKA: They weren't much of an agitator. They may be persuaded others to go with them like that. They just made up their own minds.

KANEMOTO: Tosh, from there, what happened now?

HAMATAKA: We kept on training and from there, we were prepared to go overseas.

KANEMOTO: Did you know you were going to go overseas? To the European front? Okay.

HAMATAKA: We left about August. They gave us a one week furlough and that was it.

KANEMOTO: What did you do with your one week furlough? Did you go to Camp Amache?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Did you run into any kind of bad experience or good experience? Did you travel in your uniform?

HAMATAKA: Yes. I didn't come across anything. Oh, I forgot to tell you; from Fort Bliss, my father said, "Well, I'm gonna sell some of the equipment back home." I didn't know if I could get back home to California, but I put in for a pass to go back here to do my business. They gave me a written pass to come back here. I came back and the people that were leasing our place bought all my father's pigs.

KANEMOTO: Was it a fair price?



HAMATAKA: It was fair, but. . .

KANEMOTO: But below the market value?

HAMATAKA: You know, you couldn't do anything about that. I hitchhiked from Tracy. I came back as far as Los Angeles and I had to transfer trains. The first train I got on was called the Milktrain; it stopped at every place. It went through Oakland and came to Sacramento. I got on that train in the evening and in the morning, we were still at camp Tehachapi. Before Tracy I said, "Boy, I'm gonna get off and hitchhike, otherwise, I'll never get back." So, I got off and hitchhiked and people gave me rides.

KANEMOTO: Because you were in uniform?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: So it was an advantage to be in uniform?

HAMATAKA: When I got out to Stockton, they had a decal or something in the back that said, "No Japs in California."

KANEMOTO: And they gave you a ride?

HAMATAKA: Yes, they gave me a ride.

KANEMOTO: What did they ask you?

HAMATAKA: They didn't ask me much. They took me for Chinese or Filipino or what. They never asked me. And then I got right back to Stockton Boulevard and hitchhiked to Florin.

KANEMOTO: Did you call him to pick you up or something when you got real close?



HAMATAKA: I forgot. Somebody brought me down there.

KANEMOTO: That was the time when you came to sell the farm equipment back home. Was getting back to camp more difficult?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: No?

HAMATAKA: The guy took me down; he told me, "Don't go out at nights." This couple's place, he had a two story building and I went to look at it. We had some stuff stored there. There was a pile there now. There must've been other families that stacked stuff in there too.

KANEMOTO: Was it okay though? It wasn't broken into?

HAMATAKA: It wasn't broken into, but most of the people lost everything in there.

KANEMOTO: That's why I'm asking. But when you saw it, it was okay?

HAMATAKA: I saw all the pieces in there. We didn't put anything in there, did we?

SUE: I don't know, but everything I had stored at the Kaikan [community building], they stole.

KANEMOTO: That's what we want to say. Our civil rights were really denied with all this interruption, which was so needless when we look at it today.

HAMATAKA: That was 1943, you know.

KANEMOTO: The climate was. . . well because you're not here, it's a temptation all the way around. Along the way, were you



given the opportunity to finish high school when you were in the service?

HAMATAKA: I went to a continuation high school.

KANEMOTO: Was it in the military?

HAMATAKA: That was when I was home before the war.

KANEMOTO: Oh I see, so you do have a high school diploma then?

HAMATAKA: I don't have one. I didn't continue all the way.

KANEMOTO: Did you find that not having a diploma from high school slowed you down in the military?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: It did. I think that these things are nice to share with your grandchildren because education is ultimately. . .

HAMATAKA: I asked some of the people in the VFW too. The reason I didn't get around in the army is because I didn't have a diploma. "Could be," they said. Because if you had junior college, [two year college], you're acceptable almost anywhere. That's the reason they didn't take me for M.I. S. [Military Intelligence Service].

[End Tape 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape 2, Side A]

KANEMOTO: Then where did you go?

HAMATAKA: We went to Camp Shelby for one week. Not for training.

KANEMOTO: You really moved around didn't you?

HAMATAKA: Then we went to Maryland. Geez, I can't see that. Well,



anyway before our embarkation.

KANEMOTO: And you knew you were going to be embarked.

HAMATAKA: Yes. That's where we were all set out for. We knew then while we were there. We knew some people that were in Boston, and then boy, when we went to see him, we had a night on the town.

KANEMOTO: Now, is that a person who left camp and settled out there?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Okay, and they relocated from camp out in Boston and he found a new life there?

HAMATAKA: Well, they worked.

KANEMOTO: A Florin person?

HAMATAKA: Yes. One was named Kurima. Do you know her?

KANEMOTO: Kurima? Kurima family. . . oh.

HAMATAKA: Hirakawa, Kurima.

KANEMOTO: Hirakawa. That was a nice homecoming. I bet they were happy.

HAMATAKA: Then we were invited to this. . . did you ever hear of this Earl Finch. . .the godfather for 442nd? Did you ever hear those things?

KANEMOTO: I think I heard it way back then. . .

HAMATAKA: Godfather. He's well to do and lives in Hattiesberg [Mississippi]. . . is right near the fort in Shelby. He used to treat all these soldiers from 442nd. He operated the suite on



top of the nice hotel. . . . I can't think of it.

KANEMOTO: Hilton? Hyatt?

HAMATAKA: New York's finest hotel.

KANEMOTO: Oh, Waldorf?

HAMATAKA: Everything was on hand. If you can get up there from camp.  
We didn't make it.

KANEMOTO: Now he was treating you? All Niseis?

HAMATAKA: The 442nd.

KANEMOTO: So, you were already in this 442nd group as you were  
departing?

HAMATAKA: As a group, we were going as a replacement.

KANEMOTO: 442nd. And you knew what your mission was?

HAMATAKA: It took us about two weeks on a boat. There were a lot of  
other boats too.

KANEMOTO: Now, this Mr. Finch, he was. . . . he didn't have a military  
rank?

HAMATAKA: No, no he was a civilian. We were already embarked and we  
got off at. . . . There was captured. . . . What kind of a boat was  
it? He had a French crew. A captured German boat and a  
French crew, and we were the Japanese on there. We had  
about five or six hundred of us on there.

KANEMOTO: Six hundred Nisei's. My goodness.

HAMATAKA: Imagine that.

KANEMOTO: Now, they came from all over? Any Hawaii people?



HAMATAKA: They were part of Shelby. From McClellan. There were three companies in there.

KANEMOTO: McClellan and. . .

HAMATAKA: Part of Shelby

KANEMOTO: Shelby.

HAMATAKA: We went to Shelby. A big surprise that was. [Inaudible] Tom Nakao, one of my buddies. He was in Shelby and he got demoted and he went shanghai so he got in our group.  
[Laughter]

KANEMOTO: Oh, why was he demoted? Do you know?

HAMATAKA: I don't know.

KANEMOTO: Okay. Not because of racial discrimination.

HAMATAKA: He went down. Anyway, we got to Italy. when you first look at that place . . . . all the smoke.

KANEMOTO: There was quite a bit of damage already?

HAMATAKA: We would all have to weave ourselves through the harbor. We went back in 1977. We took a tour. I could see the same dealing with the battle squad. Still, there on the waterfront. Cleaned up all the stuff but the building is all there. The shell hit the. . . cave it in. . . it's still there all this time.

KANEMOTO: Did they make a memorial of it?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: But isn't that kind of terrible to look at it as a reminder, I mean. . .



HAMATAKA: No, if it was your own country, it is.

KANEMOTO: So the Italian government did not. . .

HAMATAKA: Oh, I don't know but they cleaned up all the harbor though.

KANEMOTO: There's so much to do. Okay, so you're in Italy.

HAMATAKA: We're in Italy.

KANEMOTO: What's the next step?

HAMATAKA: We were like a bunch of cattle then. We were brought into. . . they call it repo depo. You first get off the boat then they take you to this place and we stayed about a week, I think, before we got assigned. Then guess what? While at the repo depo, along comes this sergeant. That was a First Sergeant that was from Fort Bliss. That was a big surprise. There were quite a few boys from Fort Bliss, you know. And then beer rationing came. And we sat through with the First Sergeant all night. The funny thing is the sergeant didn't really care for Japanese at first but at the end, he really cared.

KANEMOTO: And he knew he was gonna lead you?

HAMATAKA: No. We all split at repo depo. You don't know where you're gonna go. We knew where we were gonna go. It's a big place and there's a lot of soldiers in there and they get sent to different places. [Inaudible] placement. After that we [Inaudible] 442nd pulled back from Northern Italy. They came all the way back to . . . all the way back to Naples. . . . Yes, Naples. We stayed in Naples. Used to be a college at



University of Naples. We all stayed there for just holidays.

KANEMOTO: That was your assigned quarters.

HAMATAKA: That's where we were all assigned. And we had to go alphabetically. I was assigned to B company and Torao was assigned to Hayashi. He's from Florin too, near Perkins. He was assigned to B Company too. Later on, he was killed in first action in the Lost Battalion deal. So, from there, we shifted. We went to France from Italy. So, I never saw any action in Italy at that time, so we went to France from there to Marseille. That was a rough boat trip. Everybody got sick there. You go to the strait and the water gets rough. And the boat. . .

KANEMOTO: It's so crowded.

HAMATAKA: That's a pretty [Inaudible] vessel. Shook us up. So anyway, we got to Marseille and then to . . . we regrouped there. Then we got sent up to part of a central plant and that part was . . . before you go up to the front, you get everything resupplied again. We have to have rifles. . . and we didn't know which way was which. Because they all go by the map and first we go by. Have you heard of Bruyeres?

KANEMOTO: Yes, I've heard of it.

HAMATAKA: That's where the people come down.

KANEMOTO: Yes, I heard from Osame Doi. Her husband was quite involved in that area too.



HAMATAKA: That was the first object to reliberate and that did take long. Two days of fighting. A lot of people got killed doing that fighting. They were all ready for it. And after that. . .

KANEMOTO: You were the replacement?

HAMATAKA: Yes. We were the replacement and were assigned to each different company. so they assigned me to a motor company and we . . . Terao, he got in the rifle company. Rifle platoon, I mean, and assigned the first scout. I tell Terao, "Why don't you come again to the motor, man. " We train together as motors, you know? Then he said, "I'm a first scout." "First. Number one man, huh?"

KANEMOTO: Right, right.

HAMATAKA: Then we went to a . . .

KANEMOTO: By choice now?

HAMATAKA: No, not by choice. He's just. . .

KANEMOTO: Okay, he gets assigned to it.

HAMATAKA: [Inaudible] He was trained for motor. . . He had to pack a BAR, a Browning Automatic Rifle. It's heavy. Well, anyway, when we were at Lost Battalion, and the second day, the third day, I think, he got killed.

KANEMOTO: Say, Toshio, how did you feel when you really saw somebody that you know die this way? What is the G.I.'s feeling?

HAMATAKA: You know we are scared already, you know.

HAMATAKA: Sometimes you feel numb or. . .



KANEMOTO: Right. I'm sure you do.

HAMATAKA: The more you think about it the more some people go crazy.  
[Pause] I don't know.

KANEMOTO: Okay, what was your communication with home with Sue?  
Were you getting letters and communication?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Quite regularly?

HAMATAKA: No, to tell you, if you thought like that you don't get mail.  
You know, when you come back. Sometimes you're off for a week, as long as a week, but that Lost Battalion deal took about ten days because I got hit in the thigh. I got out of it.

KANEMOTO: You got hit in the thigh?

HAMATAKA: Yes, lucky hit. So, I stayed in the hospital for a while in a town called Plumelian [France]. It was kind of a resort. It dates back to the days of Napoleon.

KANEMOTO: Oh. So, it was being used as a resort at that time and then the U.S. Army took over the building as a hospital. So, it was kind of nice. How did you feel? Did they take care of you well?

HAMATAKA: Well, it was nothing, you know. Just a scratch. It ripped through my pants. They couldn't take it out because there was only a small shrapnel and there was nothing to it. I took a bath everyday so it won't get well, you see? [Laughter]

KANEMOTO: What's this? They didn't take you in right away?



HAMATAKA: No, they didn't release me.

KANEMOTO: Oh, okay.

HAMATAKA: If they release me, then I have to go up to [Inaudible]. I didn't want to in that snow. It was snowing. . .

KANEMOTO: Okay. It was wintertime.

HAMATAKA: So, everytime I took a . . . Hey, you know the bathtub there, they say the place is as old as Napoleon days. The bathtub is about ten foot long. You could take about two strokes in there.

KANEMOTO: It's like an onsen [hot spring], huh?

HAMATAKA: Yes, it's natural.

KANEMOTO: Yes, onsen. . .

HAMATAKA: Oh, it feels good.

KANEMOTO: Japanese hot spring. Is it hot spring?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Ah, you think your memory's come back.

HAMATAKA: [Inaudible] then I heard the 100th gonna move out. After the 100th, I mean, Lost Battalion moved. . . there weren't too many guys coming down there you see. So, they say, they're gonna move to the south. I heard that. Then I jumped up. I said, "I'm gonna get out of here." He released me. Then I joined the K Company. We had to travel all the way from [Inaudible] way down to the southern part of France. Southern part of France that was. . . we were right up to the



border. That was near Monte Carlo. I go to K Company and I know a buddy in K Company. Tom Nakao. He's the guy that got busted at Shelby. He was in K Company. I didn't know he was in K Company. You keep running into people. While I was traveling there, I bumped into him. He said this guy named Hisatomi through the mail, he sent him a bottle of whiskey. How did we ever get a bottle of whiskey through the mail? That was, that was illegal huh?

KANEMOTO: Yes. They . . . censor things too, don't they? Don't they censor things? in the mail?

HAMATAKA: Anyway, the guy [inaudible]. One sip and [Inaudible]. It was for him, Peter, me and [Inaudible]. It was for four of us. We started to drink that bottle. I took it right out of my mouth. I can't drink at all. [Laughter] That was good though.

KANEMOTO: So, while up at the front, you didn't get any treats. I mean, you didn't get any beer or anything like that?

HAMATAKA: No, not on the front. You're lucky if you get food. See, we were trapped for two days. We couldn't move. And all we had were C-rations. That was all long gone already. I didn't eat for two days. And . . .

KANEMOTO: We need to hear about this because we're in a country of plenty. We don't know what not having food means.

HAMATAKA: People who are battle-wise and have been there, they don't. . . they just prepare for themselves. You can go C-ration. You



know the C-ration in the can. You know what they pick out, the first thing? The first guy runs for the C-ration. They pick out the beans.

KANEMOTO: Beans? Now, why is that?

HAMATAKA: Because it's cold, you see.

KANEMOTO: Oh, you can eat it cold.

HAMATAKA: You can eat stew or potato hash. They're awful.

KANEMOTO: It's greasy, and it's cold.

HAMATAKA: People change that and it's pretty good.

KANEMOTO: You can still taste it right?

HAMATAKA: So if you lag behind and you get a cold pot of hash or something like that. You gotta take all the beans.

KANEMOTO: It gets tiresome huh? After eating all the C-rations?

HAMATAKA: Well, then you get K-rations. You get tired of that. . . cheese and crackers. But they can't get through with the hot rations.

KANEMOTO: You have to depend on it. It's a survival kind of thing. So, there's more fighting to come for you?

HAMATAKA: Well, I didn't see the Lost Battalion all the way because I got hit the second day. I told you about the scratch I got.

KANEMOTO: Did you have any trouble with the leg?

HAMATAKA: No. When I got hit the second time, I really got it then.

KANEMOTO: Where did you get hit?

HAMATAKA: All through my shoulders to my leg.

KANEMOTO: This time on the left side.



HAMATAKA: Left side. That was when I went back to Italy.

KANEMOTO: How did you feel? I heard it was pretty bad.

HAMATAKA: Well, the battle wasn't hard fought like the Lost Battalion's.  
That was a battle. They were on the top.

KANEMOTO: Yes, they're seeing, looking down. So that was before they  
were rescued? You got injured?

HAMATAKA: Oh, after.

KANEMOTO: So, was your medical treatment adequate? You were  
confined for quite a while.

HAMATAKA: A month now. We're talking about Italy now. After the Lost  
Battalion, we moved out to the border of Sicily, where we  
patrolled the area there. We didn't do any fighting. We just  
patrolled the area. I laugh everytime I see that guy, Asai. He  
was from Los Angeles and I used to know him from Fort  
Bliss. He came as a replacement and that day he went out to  
get water and some sniper up ahead fired at him and caught  
him right in the leg. He just got here. "Lucky guy," we said.  
"Boy, you get to go home now."

KANEMOTO: You almost have to treat it with humor, huh?

HAMATAKA: And then the building I was staying - - the outpost. We had  
this three story outpost, apartment. We were at ground level  
and one day the shell. . . who had the dud come through two  
stories and landed in the kitchen but didn't explode.

KANEMOTO: Thank goodness.



HAMATAKA: If it would have exploded, it would explode in the upper story.

KANEMOTO: As soon as it hits?

HAMATAKA: Oh, I was scared.

KANEMOTO: When you were injured, Tosh, was your religious faith respected? You're Buddhist aren't you?

HAMATAKA: How's that?

KANEMOTO: Are you Buddhist?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: When you were injured, I'm sure you're not up in the front. Were you religious. . .

HAMATAKA: Then, I had no religion or anybody like that.

KANEMOTO: But there were some ministers who were Buddhist in the service?

HAMATAKA: No. They just enacted that lately. Either there were Protestants or Catholics but mostly Jews.

KANEMOTO: But no Buddhist priests? Because so many of the Asians. . . Niseis fought over there so I was just wondering if they met that special need.

HAMATAKA: You see, each battalion got its own minister, chaplain. We had a chaplain named Chaplain Yost. He was a kind of Jewish fellow. He was really good. So we would go out to the front outpost and he'd come way out there on his own. And this was with three or four guys around there and they're not



very active people. He would hold a service.

KANEMOTO: That type of little gathering meant a lot?

HAMATAKA: To see a chaplain come up there. It's rough coming up there.

KANEMOTO: Meaning that he's just as much military and doing his mission.

HAMATAKA: Because he didn't have to do that.

KANEMOTO: So, what was your injury entailing? Did you get a punctured lung or any part of your vital organs?

HAMATAKA: I don't know. About three pieces of shrapnel went through my lungs and stopped right behind the heart. It's still in there. They didn't take it out. As long as it doesn't infect.

KANEMOTO: It didn't collapse your lungs?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: It did?

HAMATAKA: I'll tell you that part too. As soon as you get hit, they're supposed to put you in the litter and when they tried to get me out of there, all these shrapnels started coming in there, so they abandoned me and they went to cover.

KANEMOTO: So, you were really up in the front.

HAMATAKA: I can't walk. But then they picked me up and took me to the aide station. Then Chaplain Yost was right there with a smoke. He would even light it for you and everything. Then they brought me down to the regimental and then I connected with 92nd. The 92nd outfit, that's a colored outfit.



The doctor tried to give me a transfusion. I told him I didn't need a transfusion. I didn't lose any blood, you know.

KANEMOTO: You didn't?

HAMATAKA: He couldn't get the needle in me.

KANEMOTO: So, you didn't lose too much blood externally?

HAMATAKA: What was happening to me was, my lungs were filling up. . .

KANEMOTO: Yes, internally, you were bleeding.

HAMATAKA: They thought I got a hole and punctured lungs. So they transferred me to the field hospital from there. I got there at night earlier in the evening. First thing they do is give me a shot. They had to take an X-ray. It's cold. . . . I couldn't move my leg. I couldn't move it. They took an X-ray anyway. That's how I could remember when they. . . . I think nine o'clock next morning I came to.

KANEMOTO: But it seems like a long time before they did something to you to help you?

HAMATAKA: There were massive people injured. You know, they line up the gurney into the tent. Some guys are outside the tents. It's cold. But you have to take all your clothes off and they're short-handed too. You don't know what doctor is gonna operate on you or what. You see the incision they did and you think they would've sewed it up. No, they look like two big lips meeting like that. The incision's pretty nice though. It's a little rough.



HAMATAKA: Then after that, the next day I woke up. It was all right but they wanted to transfer me to [Inaudible]. When I got there, they put me in a limb ward.

KANEMOTO: Arms and legs. . .

HAMATAKA: Then they bring me a [Inaudible] and I could see the ceiling spinning. So the guy next door called the nurses. I couldn't do anything. I don't remember how the nurse. . . she looked at the record and said, "You don't belong here. You got chest wounds." She called the surgeon and the operating room or something. Boy, they wheeled me in there and started draining. You know that [Inaudible] bottle they got? What size is that? A half a gallon?

KANEMOTO: It's about a liter. Usually it's a liter or it's about 1000 cc [cubic centimeter]; a little more than a quart.

HAMATAKA: It looked like it was a half gallon bottle to me. They filled that up and half a next one.

KANEMOTO: It was all in your chest cavity.

HAMATAKA: Yes, I'm lucky I'm alive.

KANEMOTO: You were how old by then?

HAMATAKA: Thirty years old.

KANEMOTO: Almost 30 years old. Isn't that something? You almost died, you said and look what you're able to do now.

HAMATAKA: That's [Inaudible]. A lot of people died because they didn't get the care.



KANEMOTO: That's why I'm trying to probe to see how it must have felt while you were waiting. It must've felt like forever; waiting for someone to help you. You must've really been healthy to have all that fight in you.

HAMATAKA: There was another soldier who came in from the 88th and they said they gotta pump that out. They didn't even take him to the operating room. They did it right there in the bed. And I could see what they're doing. It was the same thing they done to me. It was too late. He died.

KANEMOTO: What were your thoughts then?

HAMATAKA: I thought I came awful close to that.

KANEMOTO: I'm sure you thought of your family too, at home.

HAMATAKA: Seems like these were all chest wards and we had all the same cases. Everyday they come and take that water out of our chests with long needles like that. You ever see them?

KANEMOTO: They aspirate the lungs.

HAMATAKA: It was all right until I saw what the doctor did to this guy next door. I didn't want to look but I looked. He poked that long needle in him. Then I was up next. When he stuck that needle in, I was getting dizzy and that nurse helped me.

KANEMOTO: Okay, now, these were mostly the Nisei group?

HAMATAKA: I was the only Nisei there in that ward. They all went to different hospitals.

KANEMOTO: This was a bigger hospital so they were all brought in from all



over. The serious cases.

[End Tape 2, Side A]

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

KANEMOTO: So, you were in the hospital for about a month?

HAMATAKA: The doctor was German.

KANEMOTO: He was a German military man?

HAMATAKA: No. I don't think he was. He said he studied in Mississippi.  
But the way he talked, he talked just like the German people.

KANEMOTO: He had an accent.

HAMATAKA: He saved my life though.

KANEMOTO: Did the military check back with you once in a while to see  
how you're doing? Or did they do that for a little while  
afterward?

HAMATAKA: Yes, I used to go to San Francisco to get checked.

KANEMOTO: Do you think overall they took good care of you?

HAMATAKA: Yes. In those days, we took penicillin shots and in my  
service records, there's 162 penicillin shots.

KANEMOTO: Every three hours, huh?

HAMATAKA: Around the clock.

KANEMOTO: When I was in training, I know it was every three hours.

HAMATAKA: It's painful.

KANEMOTO: I know it stung because we had to put it in the muscle.

HAMATAKA: They put it in my leg. They should put it in one place  
because it's hard to sleep with all the pain.



KANEMOTO: For all these injuries now, you were injured in two separate incidents. Did you get two Purple Hearts for this?

HAMATAKA: Well, Purple Heart and they give you Cluster for the second one.

KANEMOTO: So, you're still entitled to care at the Veteran's hospital?

HAMATAKA: Yes. Well, they claim I'm 60 percent because for each, like the leg counts as 20 percent and the arm and chest 20 percent each. But they should really give for the chest mostly.

KANEMOTO: You can live without an arm but can't without a chest. But Tosh, you walk most of the golf games, right?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: That's remarkable. It doesn't affect you. You are really strong.

HAMATAKA: After I was discharged and I came out and was working, the shrapnel came out of my knee.

KANEMOTO: It worked its way out.

HAMATAKA: I don't know.

KANEMOTO: So soon after you were discharged? Medically discharged after the one month in the hospital.

HAMATAKA: One month, no. After that they flew me home.

KANEMOTO: Sue didn't see you until after you were flown home?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: All the way home?

SUE: No, I was in camp.



KANEMOTO: You were flown back to camp?

HAMATAKA: No, I was. . .

KANEMOTO: Oh, you're still a military person.

HAMATAKA: I was a . . .

SUE: Cape Canaveral, Cape Cod.

HAMATAKA: I was flown back to Denver, Fitzsimmon Hospital.

KANEMOTO: Oh yes. He had to recover there too.

HAMATAKA: They sent me to Kit Carson. That's in Camp Carson. There's like a resort there.

KANEMOTO: What state?

SUE: Colorado.

HAMATAKA: Colorado Springs. It's a place called Kit Carson. They had a hospital there; mostly just to recuperate. Then they show you a trade.

KANEMOTO: Oh, that's nice. I didn't hear that.

HAMATAKA: I stayed there about a month. From there I went to Amache.

KANEMOTO: So what kind of vocation did you learn?

HAMATAKA: I was learning electricity over there. I was good. I wish I stayed there longer. Then I got discharged. September what?

SUE: Second or third.

HAMATAKA: No, later than that. Then they gave me five cents a mile to go home.

KANEMOTO: So, that's when you went to Amache?

HAMATAKA: Yes. From there, I got five cents a mile to California, but I



went to Amache and my sister and brother-in-law picked me up in Amache.

SUE: They closed up Amache.

KANEMOTO: Oh, so you had to leave. What was your feeling, Sue? Can you raise your voice a little and tell us how you felt?

HAMATAKA: She was very quiet.

KANEMOTO: She was very quiet, huh? She was awed to think of what you had to go through. And your kids by then were growing up.

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: Two and three. Did you try to get any job at Amache at all?

HAMATAKA: In Amache?

KANEMOTO: When you went to camp, you didn't do any job. . .

HAMATAKA: No, it was almost closing up then.

KANEMOTO: So you decided to come right back.

HAMATAKA: In September of '45.

KANEMOTO: So from there, were you allowed to come back to California?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: You came back to Florin? Did you find everything all right? Did you lose anything?

HAMATAKA: No, lost every little thing but. . .

KANEMOTO: You lost every little thing? Where were these things, at the Kaikan?

HAMATAKA: I don't know.



SUE: Those Italian people stole everything.

HAMATAKA: The people that leased the place.

KANEMOTO: The people that leased your house stole everything?

SUE: No, they made money at our place, so they went out and bought a ranch.

HAMATAKA: They leased the whole twenty acres.

KANEMOTO: They leased twenty acres, huh? And they still took all those things. They made money off your farm and still. . .

SUE: They never thought we would ever come back.

KANEMOTO: That's too bad. That's taking advantage of people.

HAMATAKA: They're mostly like that, huh?

KANEMOTO: Okay, Tosh, what did you do after coming back to Florin again?

HAMATAKA: I picked up jobs here and there.

KANEMOTO: Did you use your electrical training for something?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: Did you do some farming?

SUE: No, he went into garage business.

HAMATAKA: I contacted [Inaudible] at Lodi one year and we made a couple of bucks, enough to tie myself.

KANEMOTO: So, physically, you were able to do this kind of job?

HAMATAKA: I have to do it.

KANEMOTO: Well. . .

HAMATAKA: You know, my hand was numb for a while because they cut



me. The operation was right here, and they cut the nerve or something. So my hand was numb for a while, but it came back.

KANEMOTO: But at that time, when you bought the place at Lodi, you couldn't function too well? It was still numb?

HAMATAKA: I think it was good for me, because I was moving. It's better than laying around. If you feel sorry for yourself, you wouldn't do all this stuff.

KANEMOTO: I know you didn't give up. This is why I'm trying to see what was the next step. So, you went into the garage business?

HAMATAKA: Yes, we bought the corner over there. I think it was an old blacksmith shop.

KANEMOTO: Quite a different switch.

HAMATAKA: I bought the place. You know it was 4,000 dollars. It took how many years to pay for it with 4 or 5 percent interest? It was nothing then, forty-five dollars a month.

KANEMOTO: Did you know enough about cars?

HAMATAKA: Oh yes. The old cars are not like cars today.

KANEMOTO: Yes, too many electronic things.

HAMATAKA: I had to concrete the whole floor of the blacksmith shop because it was a dirt floor. That was the first thing I did. And I only had a tray of tools.

KANEMOTO: You made do with what you had. By then your family grew. You had two more children after that.



HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: You had Jane and Connie. Was that after you came out of camp?

SUE: Yes. Those two won't get any money.

KANEMOTO: They won't get redress. Well, while we're talking about redress, how do you feel about the redress?

HAMATAKA: They should give us more money. [Laughter]

KANEMOTO: They should give you more for what you had to go through needlessly, huh?

HAMATAKA: Well, I get my compensation too because of disability so, I can't cry about it.

KANEMOTO: Life treated you fairly then. The government treated you fairly.

HAMATAKA: I mean the 60 percent bracket, I'm entitled to mostly everything.

KANEMOTO: Well, you certainly deserve it because you were close to death at one time. So, would you like to say something about your children? Hannah, what is she doing today?

HAMATAKA: She and another got their own business. They transcribe doctor's . . .

KANEMOTO: Oh, medical transcribers.

HAMATAKA: At the hospital.

KANEMOTO: A real specialty, isn't it?

HAMATAKA: She's even got the U.C. [University of California] hospital in



San Francisco, and all the big hospitals in Oakland too.

KANEMOTO: You said Ronald's still single?

HAMATAKA: Still single. He works for Pac [Pacific] Bell. Ronnie volunteered one year for air force in Texas and took. . . teletyping. It was used for communications. So he had that and when he got out after one year, he could've gone to three places- -McClellan, Depot, or a telephone company. He picked the telephone company and he's still with them today. He says he's going to retire pretty soon.

KANEMOTO: Oh, he's doing that well?

HAMATAKA: No, look how many years he's put in already. He's got what 25 years. Ever since he was 21.

KANEMOTO: Like you, he's got to keep going. You set an example that you have to keep going. [Laughter]

HAMATAKA: Jane works at a post office in San Francisco.

KANEMOTO: She's out of town.

HAMATAKA: She's got the best deal.

KANEMOTO: Oh, what's the deal?

HAMATAKA: Well, she bought some houses and [Inaudible]. Boy, she's. . .

KANEMOTO: She was at the right place at the right time. And Connie?

HAMATAKA: Connie, she's just getting started. She works at Channel 10. She majored in Communication. It took her so long to get out of school.

KANEMOTO: Well, it does sometimes. So, how many grandchildren do



you have?

HAMATAKA: Two. Twins.

KANEMOTO: Who's are they?

SUE: Hannah.

HAMATAKA: Hannah's divorced though.

KANEMOTO: Oh, I see.

HAMATAKA: But Hannah's mother-in-law took these two boys through school. They're pretty smart. They got scholarships out of high school and one went to Harvey Mudd. And the other one, Mike, went to the school in San Luis Obispo.

KANEMOTO: Cal Poly.

HAMATAKA: Yes, Cal Poly. After a year, he didn't like it so he transferred to Rice.

SUE: In Houston, Rice University.

HAMATAKA: And Greg finished Harvey Mudd in Science and Math. Then he went to Maryland. They paid all the expenses and everything.

KANEMOTO: A full scholarship.

HAMATAKA: And he didn't finish it; went one year. He got tired of school. Now he's working. You know they get to pick their jobs, huh? I mean there's a selection of jobs. And Michael's behind one year because he transferred, but he finished Rice. Then they sent him to Russia. That was a different deal; CCC camp for five years. And he came home and came by the



other day and say he's going to Tennessee for more schooling. That's Dartmouth. He got to pick out all the good schools. It's all paid.

KANEMOTO: They must do exceptionally well.

HAMATAKA: Well, they're both smart. Hannah had straight A's you know, and she keeps after the boys.

KANEMOTO: It's paid off?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: That's nice, they're really on their way. You must really be proud of them.

HAMATAKA: [Hannah's] mother-in-law sent the boys to school because she [Hannah] was divorced and her ex-husband's a doctor. The ex-mother-in-law was a school teacher. You know, to send two kids to school at one time to a college like that is. . .

KANEMOTO: Outstanding colleges. I'm glad you've lived long enough to see even your grandchildren become adults. That's really wonderful. It must give you a good feeling to know that they're going the right way.

HAMATAKA: Well, if the rest of my kids got married, I would've had a lot more grandchildren. [Laughter]

KANEMOTO: That's all right, they're doing fine; career wise. Could be worse. Tosh, this is a very interesting story. You must also have very personal thoughts about war at any time. You must have a lot of personal feelings about war. You know,



the Korean conflict, Vietnam, or whatever. I mean, seeing all these people injured, even if you win, . . . nothing. . . . You have a lot to pay for later. Do you have any closing remarks?

HAMATAKA: My closing remark is, Marion, you're wonderful.

KANEMOTO: Thank you very much. I'm glad you have fully recovered to enjoy life. Tosh, you had hobbies like fishing didn't you?

HAMATAKA: Yeah, more than golf.

KANEMOTO: More than golf? What's your favorite game? Is it deep sea, or river fishing or fly fishing?

HAMATAKA: The best I like is getting my Kokanee now a days.

KANEMOTO: Oh, Kokanee, that's quite an art isn't it? It's hard.

HAMATAKA: I like it more than anything else.

KANEMOTO: Ok, I've heard of that, Kokanee. That small, salmon-like, trout-like. . .

HAMATAKA: You don't like it?

KANEMOTO: No, I say it's very good. It's delicate.

HAMATAKA: Jim eats my sandwich all the time. . . my smoked Kokanee.

KANEMOTO: I wonder if he appreciates it.

HAMATAKA: This is my buddy. [Showing some old army pictures]

KANEMOTO: You bought a car. . .

HAMATAKA: We bought a 1934 Chevrolet sedan in El Paso so we could commute to our reception center every day. We lived off the coast and we had to go to work to the reception center. Jim and I bought a 1934 Chevrolet.



KANEMOTO: This is Jim Izumisaki.

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: He lived off the base too?

HAMATAKA: Yes, he got married there, in El Paso.

KANEMOTO: To another Nisei?

HAMATAKA: Yes.

KANEMOTO: So you lived off the base and had to drive back and forth to your working place?

HAMATAKA: Yes, instead of taking the bus, we bought a car and we hauled 200 people.

KANEMOTO: Oh, you had a carpool going?

HAMATAKA: And they would pay us ten cents or twenty cents a ride. You figure, cheap now but in those days. . .

KANEMOTO: You paid for your gas ?

HAMATAKA: You paid for gas, expenses, and we had to patch the tire every week. We had time on our hands so we went to this warden . . . ration board

KANEMOTO: What kind of warden?

HAMATAKA: Ration board. They would give us new tires. They got tired of us coming over all the time, so they finally gave us a tire.

KANEMOTO: Because at that time, tires were rationed. How do you qualify for a tire. It has to be pretty bad?

HAMATAKA: Well, I was doing essential work on them. You couldn't use



the car anymore.

KANEMOTO: It was that bad. How many miles did you have to commute?

HAMATAKA: It wasn't too far, huh? About 15 minutes. The other two or three guys I ride with, they would've been glad to hitch a ride. You know, if it was along our way.

KANEMOTO: Sure.

HAMATAKA: Otherwise, you had to take a bus. We had enough gas from the rations we had. In fact, we got some rations left over. . .

KANEMOTO: Because you're pooling together right?

HAMATAKA: No, only we could have the rations.

KANEMOTO: Oh, only the people who have a car could legitimately have it?

HAMATAKA: We would have a couple gallons left over. So we would take a Sunday ride with it.

KANEMOTO: That was a luxury.

HAMATAKA: And then we had to ship out and we had to sell the car. I think we sold it for more than when we bought it.

KANEMOTO: Oh my, that was a good thing. You know Tosh, now that I think about it, I think we missed something really important. I do want to get this in. I know a little more about you and Sue now. You have been so supportive of Sue's several health problems. Now you've had your health problems, but those were the traumatic war injuries. But Sue has had cancer, arthritis, and I know you always seek out the best. . .



HAMATAKA: The child birth too.

KANEMOTO: Oh, she had trouble with child birth? You have been so supportive. Isn't that right Sue?

SUE: Yes.

KANEMOTO: When I hear that, it really chokes me up. Tosh sounds very rough, but he's a very tender man.

HAMATAKA: No, any husband would do the same.

KANEMOTO: You think so? I don't know. When you told me you went to the Arizona Mayo clinic from here, I thought you really wanted to seek out the best for Sue, because there wasn't much help offered. . . at least I know that you really. . .

HAMATAKA: Well, you're in that business so you really understand more about it than anybody else.

KANEMOTO: But I think that it's very commendable of you because I know where you're coming from. It's only the little things that I've picked up, but you also made a trip to China. I think you went to Japan in 1977?

SUE: No, 1972.

KANEMOTO: Oh, you went to Europe in 1977, is that right? And when you went to China, that was a big trip, a major trip.

HAMATAKA: No, China was just a little trip, a small part of China.

KANEMOTO: When you went to Japan?

HAMATAKA: No, when I went to Southeast Asia.

KANEMOTO: Still, you have accomplished a lot. That's wonderful. Like



you say, you don't stay home and cry, you pursued it and when you think about it. . .

HAMATAKA: Well, you've covered quite a bit.

KANEMOTO: Well, every year it gets harder, but you've done these things. You didn't just sit back and say, "Someday, someday." And I think it's very admirable. You've enjoyed these trips?

SUE: We even went to a faith healer.

KANEMOTO: What? A faith healer in the Philippines?

SUE: In the Philippines. He's the one that got well by the faith healer. It didn't do nothing for me.

KANEMOTO: Tosh, why did you see the faith healer?

HAMATAKA: I didn't go for that purpose. When I was in the Philippines, most of the group wanted to go to the faith healer. That's what they come down there for when they're in the Philippines.

KANEMOTO: Well, I heard about it, so that's why I want to get your perspective.

HAMATAKA: This guy Baxter, he used to be a general in the Philippine army, and they do everything for him. He takes a group to the Philippines every year. He couldn't get a group to go much after the 1970s. A lot of people said, "Aw, the Philippines," but it was worth it.

KANEMOTO: What did you see the faith healer for?

HAMATAKA: When I was there? I had a back problem.



KANEMOTO: Was that from your war injuries?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: No, you don't think so?

HAMATAKA: That's from knocking my back out from lifting.

KANEMOTO: And it did help you?

HAMATAKA: Yes, and I used to go to this chiropractor and he'd get it in place. But I would have the same problem again. So when I was in the Philippines, I said, "What's wrong with me?" She was gonna see the faith healer anyway. Another thing, I was having problems with. . . . I had a prostate problem. I was getting up at night all the time; I had pains. I don't think they did anything to me that I know of. But I got all right after that. Prostate didn't bother me and my back, I've been playing golf all the time. Somedays I couldn't play golf. When I was in the Philippines, I played golf with a Chinese couple name Kim-Jang. We didn't even finish a game because my back was hurting. And then, I went to the faith healer. I'm glad because my back feels good, you know, without doing anything else.

KANEMOTO: [Inaudible] call it surgery?

HAMATAKA: No.

KANEMOTO: But he manipulated you?

HAMATAKA: She was watching me and said it looked like they put their hand [Inaudible] and it would open up a little bit, but there's



no scar. Then my daughter says no, they use that chicken liver and everything. [Laughter]

KANEMOTO: You hear about it. Sue, you didn't get any improvement?

SUE: It didn't do nothing for me.

KANEMOTO: That was for your arthritis?

SUE: For my knee. I had a high blood pressure and it didn't help me any. And what else did I do? There were three things. I have an incision in here, so I always have pain. I asked to cure that and it didn't help.

KANEMOTO: So, how much did it cost you?

SUE: Twenty five dollars a session. . .

HAMATAKA: Donation.

KANEMOTO: For twenty five dollars, it was good for you though.

HAMATAKA: I asked Baxter how much we should leave for donation. "Twenty five dollars is enough," he says. The Catholic church gets the money see. They, themselves, don't keep the money.

KANEMOTO: That's very interesting. It's talked about on T.V. and you read about it, but you can say you were there.

HAMATAKA: If you talk to medical people, they're gonna say you're ridiculous.

KANEMOTO: It's hard to believe, but then, like you say, it helped you. It was certainly worth twenty five dollars.

HAMATAKA: Oh yeah. [Laughter]

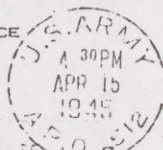


KANEMOTO: As I walked out the door, Tosh made the humorous comment that Nisei soldiers needed a full time tailor to fit the uniforms as most did not fit the G.I. issues. Tosh had a size seventeen neck, and had trouble, especially fitting the shoes. This was due to physical differences as most Nisei soldiers were shorter than the average G.I.'s.

[End Tape 2, Side 2]



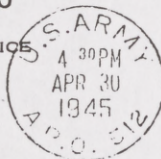
IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO  
CASUALTY BRANCH  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE \$300  
(GPO)

Mrs. Sue Y. Hamataka  
12F-5F  
Amache, Col.

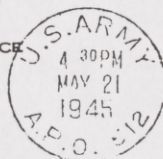
IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO  
CASUALTY BRANCH  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE \$300  
(GPO)

Mrs Sue Y Hamataka  
12F 5 F  
Amache, Colorado

IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO  
CASUALTY BRANCH  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.  
OFFICIAL BUSINESS



PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID  
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE \$300  
(GPO)

Mrs Sue Y. Hamataka  
12 F-5F  
Amache, Colo. USA



64th GENERAL HOSPITAL  
APO 428, % POSTMASTER  
New York, N.Y.

DEAR Mrs. Hamataka:

I am pleased to inform you that on 13 April 1945 your  
(Date)

husband Hamataka Toshio 39078619 Pfc Co B 442 Inf  
(Relationship) (Grade, name, Army serial number)

was \* Making Normal Improvement

Diagnosis† Penetrating wound of left thigh, shoulder, back, chest  
and left hip

\* Enter present status as—  
Making normal improvement.  
Convalescing.

† Must be written in nontechnical  
language.

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234  
9 November 1944

Very truly yours,

HUGH A. HESFORD

Major MAC Registrar

2628 Hospital Section, APO 698, c/o Postmaster NY, NY.

64th GENERAL HOSPITAL  
APO 428, % POSTMASTER  
New York N.Y.

DEAR Mrs Hamataka:

I am pleased to inform you that on 28 April 1945 your  
(Date)

Husband Hamataka Toshio 39078619 Pfc Co B 442 Inf Regt  
(Relationship) (Grade, name, Army serial number)

was \* Making Normal Improvement

Diagnosis† Penetrating wound left thigh, shoulder, chest and

\* Enter present status as—  
Making normal improvement.  
Convalescing.

† Must be written in nontechnical  
language.

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234  
9 November 1944

Very truly yours,

left hip

HUGH A. HESFORD

Major MAC Registrar

Note.—For prompt delivery address mail to.  
2628 Hospital Section, APO 698, c/o Postmaster, N. Y., N. Y.

17th General Hospital (DS)  
APO 428, % POSTMASTER  
New York, NY, USA

DEAR Mrs Hamataka:

I am pleased to inform you that on May 19, 1945 your  
(Date)

Husband Hamataka, Toshio 39078619, Pfc, 442 Infantry  
Evacuated to USA for further hospitalization there-  
fore this is a final report from this theater.

was \* Shell fragment wounds of left shoulder  
back and chest.

Diagnosis†

\* Enter present status as—  
Making normal improvement.  
Convalescing.

† Must be written in nontechnical  
language.

W. D., A. G. O. Form 234  
9 November 1944

Very truly yours,

MORACE V. CONARD

Capt. MAC Registrar

Note.—For prompt delivery address mail to.  
2628 Hospital Section APO 698, c/o Postmaster, N. Y., N. Y.